

## REMARKS

Claims 1-10 remain pending in this application. None of the claims have been amended in this response. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hunt et al.* (US Patent 5,539,881) in view of *Elliott et al.* (US Pub. 2002/0064149). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Specifically, the cited art, alone or in combination, fails to teach “transmitting a request message to the central device; ascertaining a free node number from available node numbers via the central device; and transmitting and assigning the ascertained node number to a network node” as recited in claim 1 and similarly recited in claim 9.

Regarding Hunt, the reference teaches a network element (100) set up as a Directory Services Network Element (DSNE) or remote Network Element (NE) (col. 3, lines 15-18). When configured as DSNE 201, the network element is provisioned to provide Distribution Manager (DM) function 202 and includes a global Directory Information Base (DIB) 203. When configured as NE 204, the network element is provisioned to provide Distribution Agent (DA) function 205 and includes local cache 206. The network element also includes all the routines to effect both the functions of DSNE 201 and the functions of remote NE 204 and depending on how it is configured, the appropriate DM 202, DIB 203, DA 205 and cache 206 that will be activated (col. 3, lines 40-54). An associated control service element (ACSE), in applications layer 7, is employed to establish associations between applications routines residing in different network elements, and would typically have an association established via ACSE between the distribution manager (DM) in DSNE 201 and the distribution agent (DA) in remote NE 204.

Under Hunt, the network is tested (step 313) to determine if any newly reachable network element(s) has been added to the routing table of the routing exchange protocol. If the test result in step 313 is yes, control is passed to step 314 which generates an indication(s) that a newly reachable network element(s) has been detected which indication is automatically supplied directly to applications layer 7 and, therein, to the directory distribution protocol (col. 4, line 66 - col. 5, line 10). Thus, the system of Hunt does not “assign” nodes as required in the present claims, but relies on preassigned “identity information” used in a DSNE environment - while Hunt registers the network element, Hunt does not register the newly-reachable network node

itself (col. 4, lines 56-58; col. 5, lines 30-33). Also, Hunt is completely silent regarding the transmittal of a request message to the central device as recited in the present claims.

Regarding Elliott, the reference fails to solve the deficiencies of Hunt, discussed above. Elliott teaches the use of a Resource Management Model (RMM) to manipulate resources from a resource pool ([1078, 1082-83]). However, Elliott fails to teach transmitting a request message to the central device, ascertaining a free node number from available node numbers via the central device, and transmitting and assigning the ascertained node number to a network node as required by the present claims.

Furthermore, it is not understood how the RMM configuration of Elliott would be implemented given the teaching of Hunt. Hunt discloses the use of network element as either a Directory Services Network Element (DSNE) or remote Network Element (NE), and analyzes the nodes accordingly. In contrast, the RMM of Elliott is used to define common architectural guidelines for an ISP Architecture for intersecting resources and services ([1062-69]). Applicant cannot find anywhere in the disclosure of Elliott where a dual-network element configuration as taught in Hunt is used or even disclosed in the teaching of Elliott. Applicant respectfully submits that the combination is improper and should be withdrawn.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-10 are in allowable form. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 are traversed and should be withdrawn. An early Notice of Allowance is earnestly requested. If any fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (112740-290) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,  
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